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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/728,727	12/05/2003	Mark E. Herrmann	R0586-701110	1722

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LANDO & ANASTASI, LLP
ONE MAIN STREET, SUITE 1100
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02142

EXAMINER

HARPER, TRAMAR YONG

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3714

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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07/08/2009

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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gengelso@ll-a.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/728,727	Applicant(s) HERRMANN ET AL.	
	Examiner TRAMAR HARPER	Art Unit 3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 June 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>06/08/09</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Amendment

Examiner acknowledges receipt of Request for Continued Examination filed 06/05/09. Examiner acknowledges receipt of amendments/arguments filed 06/05/09. The arguments set forth are addressed herein below. Claims 1-43 remain pending and Claims 37-43 have been newly added.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. No where in the specification does it state that there is a plurality of players entered into one game session, wherein some players are entered via the primary entry method and others are entered via the free AMOE method in the same gaming session. Paragraph 22 clearly states game sessions designated for AMOE game players and not a mixture. There is no explicit teaching of a mixture of AMOE players and Primary entry players. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim 36 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one

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skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. No where in the specification does it claim the “act of executing the **wagering for the at least one player occurs in at least one jurisdiction in which gambling is not legal**”. Every instance of “jurisdiction” in the specification refers to payment and payouts that meet legal requirements (§§ 70, 82, 117), but none refer to wagering in jurisdictions where gambling is not legal.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim 36 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear as to how a one would wager in a jurisdiction where gambling is illegal or violates common law. It is therefore unclear as to what applicant is intending to claim. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22-23, 26-31, 33-34, & 36-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Fisk (WO 00/69535 A1) in view of Itkis et al (US 2003/0171986 A1).

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Claims 1-2, 6, 9, 12-14, 16, 20, 26, 29, 31, 37, & 41: Fisk discloses a bingo gaming system that comprises providing entry into at least one or more bingo game sessions. The system includes a variety of terminal, gaming computers including computer readable memory, etc. for implementing multiple bingo games. A player can purchase entry to a bingo game at various gaming terminals or retail locations. Fisk discloses that entry to a bingo game can be done in a variety of ways such as through the Internet, telephone, or ATM interfaces all linked within a bingo network. Also, preprinted cards can be received through the newspaper inserts, lottery instant tickets, etc. All entries are validated and associated with respective player accounts. Furthermore, players cannot participate in games that are currently active, but can pay for entry into games that are inactive (Pg. 25:20-Pg. 30:5). Fisk discloses that players can establish a prepaid account through a credit card or debit card for future charges or entries into bingo games (Primary methods of entry). The player or players can receive periodic bills for charges accrued during the previous period (Pg. 12:25-Pg. 13:5- e.g. implies subscription and automated renewal into bingo games). Fisk discloses that prepaid bingo tickets can be repeatedly used for subsequent/consecutive bingo games, wherein players purchase a prepaid bingo card for use for a limited number of games before the prepaid amount is consumed. Once the prepaid amount is used anymore plays on the card must be purchased again e.g. the card must be renewed (Pg. 30:5-12). Fisk discloses that in the event that a player has a winning bingo card the pattern cell content of the card is compared to the drawn winning cell content/numbers stored in memory and if there is a match the player is awarded a payout. Payouts vary from

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jackpot awards to “leaster” awards, therefore based on the type of win gaming system determines the appropriate payout. The numbers are randomly drawn from a game computer and compared via matching computers (Pg. 27:16-24, Pg. 32:17-Pg. 33:33, Pg. 36:1-5, Pg. 3:3-24). Fisk discloses that some of the rules for the game may comprise achieving different combinations of winning patterns on a bingo card (Pg. 37:16-25). Fisk discloses an alternative method of entry (**AMOE**) into a bingo game that comprises the use of preprinted bingo cards in newspaper supplements or on the reverse side of instant game tickets. Such methods may be readily used to advertise and encourage participation in the bingo games when it is initially introduced. The instant win tickets provide the holder a **free** entry into the bingo game using the bingo game card printed on the instant win ticket (Page. 13, lines 30-Page. 14, lines 1-12). The above clearly implies at least as much that one player may purchase entry into a bingo session and another may use **a free alternative method for entry into the bingo game session**.

However, in the alternative Itkis teaches that it is well known in the art to provide free live promotional bingo games such as through internet sites providing free bingo games wherein the prizes are based on revenue from advertisements displayed on the internet sites. Itkis teaches it is known in the art for casinos to offer free bingo sessions because such offers encourage players to play other casino games offered once the session is concluded. In general such free bingo games attract bingo aficionados or devotees of bingo games (§ 1). Therefore, in the alternative one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have motivated to modify Fisk with a free

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alternative method of entry that provides free entry into a bingo session as taught by Itkis to attract devoted bingo players and attract players in general to other games of chance. Such a modification attracts or promotes the game thereby increasing player participation and revenue.

Claims 4, 10, 22, 30, & 33: Fisk discloses a special jackpot award wherein a player that must achieve a row of hits in five called numbers on a card (Pg. 39:17-23). This is clearly interpreted as determining a payout based on fixed odds of winning, considering the likely hood or probability of achieving the outcome is significantly high.

Claims 5, 23, & 34: Fisk discloses that various combination of winning pattern can achieve a “bingo” within the game and that achieving bingo can either end the game or modify the game (Pg. 37:10-34). This includes any bingo, which is well known in the art, and basically consists of achieving bingo in any known fashion until a winning bingo is achieved e.g. a bingo game wherein the odds of winning aren’t fixed.

Claims 7, 18-19, & 27: Fisk discloses the being system controlled by a game computer and/or operator. As such the computer/operator would have control of entering the at least one player by processing the AMOE of the one player (page 35:25-30). The system is capable of processing next game session via AMOE for the respective players.

Claims 8 & 28: It is inherent that there would be an indication to the player of the gaming session to be entered via AMOE e.g. the instant win ticket would have to designate entry into the bingo session (see above).

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Claim 36: Fisk in view of Itkis discloses entry into a gaming session for free that involves winning prizes that are endorsed through advertising on the Internet, therefore one can interpret that if a player does not pay to play and the prize is not based on a pot then the game is not considered to be a gambling game e.g. legal. Thus, a player in a jurisdiction where gambling is illegal could play the game session of Fisk in view of Itkis through the AMOE means. Furthermore the legal ramifications of the inventions has no barring on the novelty or scope of the invention itself and cannot be used to distinguish itself over the prior art.

Claim 38: Fisk in view of Itkis discloses the above, but fails to disclose determining the at least one player has not exceeded a maximum number of alternative method of entries. However, applicant discloses that it is known in the art for sweepstakes to limit the number of times a player can enter a sweepstakes via AMOE and that numerous methods may be used for AMOE. Applicant also discloses that the number of sessions and given periods may be any number (§ 73-74), which is an indication of mere preference or design. Furthermore, applicant fails to disclose that determining the at least one player has not exceeded a maximum number of alternative method of entries solves any stated problem, provides an advantage, or is for any particular purpose. Moreover, it appears that the AMOE means of Fisk in view of Itkis, or applicant's invention, would perform the same function of providing a free means of entry into a bingo game session for promotional purposes or increasing players interest. Therefore, it would have been prima facie obvious to modify Fisk in view of Itkis to obtain the invention as specified in claim 38 because such a modification would have been

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considered a mere design consideration which fails to patentably distinguish over the prior art of Fisk in view of Itkis.

Claims 39 & 42-43: Fisk in view of Itkis discloses tracking an entry of a player into a gaming machine, receiving contact information, and associating at least one entry with a respective bingo card. For example, Fisk discloses establishing an identifier for the a bingo card, wherein the identifier is associated with an account of the player and at least a receipt identifier (Pg. 19:line 24-Pg. 20: line2). Fisk furthermore disclosing tracking the entry of the player e.g. it maintains a real-time status of the player respective of the game card. The system maintains the matches on a bingo card, an identifier of the game session played, and contact information regarding the player such as the name of the player and location of the player (Pg. 21:line 11-Pg. 22:line 26). Fisk also discloses that communication with bingo system and the player can be established through the internet as well (Pg. 9: lines 31-33). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the tracking/account/identifying means of Fisk to the alternative free method of entry means of Itkis to provide a means of awarding a wide range of players. Such a modification provides a more efficient means of prize redemption regardless if a player is a paid patron or a player playing for free to guarantee that the appropriate players receive their due prizes.

Claim 40: Fisk in view of Itkis at least discloses accepting contact information, but fails to disclose contact information submitted through mail. However, applicant fails to disclose that having contact information submitted through mail solves any stated problem, provides an advantage, or is for any particular purpose. Moreover, it appears

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that the contact information means of Fisk in view of Itkis, or applicant's invention, would perform the same function of providing contact information for prize redemption purposes or winning announcement purposes. Therefore, it would have been prima facie obvious to modify Fisk in view of Itkis to obtain the invention as specified in claim 40 because such a modification would have been considered a mere design consideration which fails to patentably distinguish over the prior art of Fisk in view of Itkis.

Claims 3, 15, 21, & 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisk (WO 00/69535 A1) in view of Itkis et al (US 2003/0171986 A1).

Claims 3, 21, & 32: Fisk discloses the above, but excludes the wagering game as a game of skill. However, applicant fails to disclose that the wagering game being a game of skill solves any stated problem, provides an advantage, or is for any particular purpose. Moreover, it appears that the gaming system of Fisk, or applicant's invention, would perform the same function of providing a Bingo gaming system with a primary entries means as well as alternative entry means regardless of the type of game being played. Therefore, it would have been prima facie obvious to modify Fisk to obtain the invention as specified in claims 3, 21, & 32 because such a modification would have been considered a mere design consideration which fails to patentably distinguish over the prior art of Fisk.

Claim 15: Fisk discloses the above, but excludes the AMOE including a mail entry or internet entry. However, applicant fails to disclose that the AMOE including a mail entry

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or internet entry solves any stated problem, provides an advantage, or is for any particular purpose. Moreover, it appears that the gaming system of Fisk, or applicant's invention, would perform the same function of providing a Bingo gaming system with a primary entries means as well as alternative entry means regardless of the many possible alternative entry methods. Therefore, it would have been prima facie obvious to modify Fisk to obtain the invention as specified in claims 15-16 because such a modification would have been considered a mere design consideration which fails to patentably distinguish over the prior art of Fisk.

Claims 11, 17, 24, & 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisk (WO 00/69535 A1) in view of Itkis et al (US 2003/0171986 A1) in further view of Scott (US 6,102,400).

Claims 11, 17, 24, & 35: Fisk discloses the above with respect to the independent claims, but excludes the AMOE providing an entry of the at least one player in at least two game sessions and a game session associated with the wagering game providing entry by AMOE. Fisk discloses that a computer/operator controls the functionality of the game system including processing game entries. Scott teaches a gaming system comprising a "bad beat" feature that rewards players for receiving somewhat losing outcomes. For example, in a "coverall" bingo game the player with the least amount of selections covered is award an entry to three free games (Col. 9:52-Col. 10:10). Considering that Fisk discloses providing "leaster" awards or prizes it would have been obvious to have modified the gaming system of Fisk to include the AMOE feature (entry for a series of games), as taught by Scott to provide a "leaster" or "bad beat" alternative

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to the player. Such a modification, add excitement and further potential award opportunities to the player (Scott Col. 2:49-56). Thus a player is more inclined to play if losing outcomes provides potential gains as well as winning outcomes.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-43 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. In regards to the applicants arguments, the examiner believes that Fisk clearly discloses providing a AMOE for free that give a player free entry into a bingo game at least based on the instant game ticket that has a bingo card on the back example. The player never pays for entry into the bingo game as stated by the disclosure. One might conclude that the player paid for the instant game ticket, but that is irrelevant to the bingo entry provided for free on the ticket. If applicant wants to argue the opposite one skilled in the art could suggest that the example of free entry by mail or by Internet as disclosed by the instant application isn't free when considering that a participant still has to pay for internet service or for postage. However, the examiner has provided an alternative rejection as well (see above).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TRAMAR HARPER whose telephone number is (571)272-6177. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30am - 5:00pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Vo can be reached on (571) 272-4690. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ronald Laneau/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3714

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